

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
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FROM AMBASSADOR DEVINE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, ETRD, ES

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ROMERO'S COMMENTS UPON RETURN FROM THIRD
ANNUAL CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS.

1. AT PRESIDENT ROMERO'S REQUEST, I VISITED HIM IN HIS
OFFICE LATE AFTERNOON FRIDAY FEBRUARY 24. AFTER THANK-
ING ME PROFUSELY FOR MY WIFE'S AND MY GESTURE IN WAITING
PAST MIDNIGHT AT AIRPORT TO WELCOME HIM AND MRS. ROMERO
BACK FROM NEW ORLEANS, HE THEN COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON
THIRD ANNUAL CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE AND ATTENDANT
EVENTS.

2. PRESIDENT ROMERO SAID HE WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH
CONFERENCE, WITH ATTENTIONS RECEIVED, WITH EXCHANGES
HE AND OTHER SALVADORANS HAD HAD WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS
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AND BUSINESS LEADERS IN ALL THREE STATES VISITED, AND
WITH DISCUSSIONS WHICH OCCURRED OF INTEREST AND SIGNIFI-
CANT IMPLICATION FOR US, LATIN AMERICA, AND CENTRAL
AMERICA IN PARTICULAR.

3. HE HAD ESPECIALLY KIND WORDS FOR FATHER JAMES CARTER,
JESUIT PRESIDENT OF LOYLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS, WHOM

HE CREDITED WITH REASONABLE ATTITUDE AND REAL UNDERSTAND-

ING OF EL SALVADOR'S PROBLEMS. HE IMPLIED THAT FATHER CARTER MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO BRIDGING CURRENT GAP BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH IN EL SALVADOR.

4. WITH RESPECT TO DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT AT CONFERENCE, PRESIDENT ROMERO SAID HE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED TALKS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARELLANO. WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH TODMAN'S DEMONSTRATED HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN PROCEEDINGS AND WILLINGNESS REMAIN TO VERY END OF CONFERENCE. SAID HE HAD ASKED ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN URGE PRESIDENT CARTER VISIT EL SALVADOR, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS EN ROUTE TO ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA. PRESIDENT ROMERO ALSO HOPED TODMAN COULD RE-VISIT EL SALVADOR BUT REALISTICALLY RECOGNIZES THIS MAY NOT BE FEASIBLE IN NEAR FUTURE. AS ALTERNATIVE, HE HOPES AND ANTICIPATES THAT ASSISTANT AID ADMINISTRATOR VALDEZ AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARELLANO MAY COME.

5. PRESIDENT ROMERO SAID HE HAD AGAIN BROACHED TO TODMAN IDEA ORIGINALLY PRESENTED AT TIME OF RECENT VISIT, FOR PERIODIC MEETINGS OF US AND ALL LATIN AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE. AS HE ENVISIONS IT, THESE MEETINGS COULD USEFULLY OCCUR EVERY 2-3 YEARS, WOULD BE TRUE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKING SESSIONS, WOULD BE FINANCED BY ALL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES, AND WOULD PRESENT EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESIDENT CARTER TO SET FORTH CLEARLY HIS IDEAS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF INTER-AMERICAN POLICY.

6. EVEN THE PUBLIC MEDIA, SAID PRESIDENT ROMERO, HAD BEEN POSITIVE AND HELPFUL IN THEIR APPROACH TO THE CONFERENCE. THEIR QUESTIONS HAD BEEN GOOD AND NON-TENDENTIOUS.

7. EL SALVADOR'S TRADE EXHIBITS HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND A SURPRISING NUMBER OF SALES OF HANDICRAFT ITEMS HAD BEEN CONSUMMATED ON THE SPOT. PRESIDENT ROMERO BELIEVES THAT THERE IS A TRADE POTENTIAL WAITING TO BE TAPPED.

8. AS FOR INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES, ALL THREE STATES VISITED (LOUISIANA, GEORGIA AND MISSISSIPPI) HAD SHOWN INTEREST AND PLANS ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY FOR ONE OR MORE GROUPS OF BUSINESSMEN TO VISIT EL SALVADOR IN COMING MONTHS.

9. AS TO OVER-ALL ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL IMPORT,

PRESIDENT SAID IT IS NOW UP TO TRIP PARTICIPANTS TO
REVIEW THEIR EXPERIENCES, DRAW THEIR CONCLUSIONS, AND
DECIDE HOW BEST TO CONVERT THEM INTO A POSITIVE REALITY
FOR GOOD OF THE NATION.

10. AS FINAL NOTE, PRESIDENT ROMERO HAD WARM WORDS OF
PRAISE FOR HIS AND MRS. ROMERO'S EXCHANGE WITH MRS.
MELGAR (WIFE OF HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE) AT THE
CONFERENCE. SAID HE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT WHEN NEXT THEY
MEET IT BE AS TWO COMPLETE COUPLES. VANCE

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